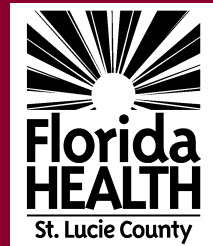


EPISODES

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Happy New Year to You! Let's Talk About Flu...

Getting sick with influenza (not a cold virus) is a miserable experience. People who have flu often get some or all of the following symptoms:

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Cough
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sometimes diarrhea and vomiting

This season we are seeing previously healthy people and pregnant women developing serious complications (including death) after getting sick with flu. These cases have been attributed to the flu virus that first came to light in 2009- Influenza A H1N1. This particular strain happens to be the most common type of flu circulating in Florida so far this season.

The single best thing you can do to keep from getting sick with flu is to get your yearly flu shot. **Everyone** who is at least 6 months of age should get the seasonal flu vaccine. Flu shots are especially important for those at high risk for serious complications of flu, including pregnant women, and for those taking care of babies too young to get their flu vaccine (see p.2).

Influenza is **five** times more likely to cause severe illness in pregnant women compared to women who are not pregnant.

- Changes in immune, heart and lung functions during pregnancy increase the risk for severe complications from influenza.
- Pregnant women with underlying health conditions are at greater risk of serious illness from flu than their healthy counterparts.
- Influenza infections also increase the risk

for premature labor and delivery.

People also have more vaccine choices this flu season. Flu shots are now abbreviated IIV (inactivated influenza vaccines).

- Trivalent influenza vaccines or IIV3 protect against three (2-A & 1-B) flu viruses
- Quadrivalent influenza vaccines or IIV4 protect against four (2-A & 2-B) flu viruses
- Adults with severe egg allergy may have the option of getting a IIV3 *recombinant* influenza vaccine (RIV3). This vaccine is made *without using eggs at any point during its manufacture*.
- A trivalent cell culture-based flu vaccine (ccIIV3) should also be available for adults.

Live attenuated influenza vaccines (LAIV) are the nasal mist vaccines. The quadrivalent version (LAIV4) is expected to replace the trivalent (LAIV3) formula.

People who are sick with flu can spread their illness starting about a day *before* their symptoms start lasting through about a week into their illness. Children can share their flu illness for even longer.

Flu viruses spread when people with flu spew droplets as they cough, sneeze or talk. Some of these droplets end up in the mouths/noses of innocent bystanders. Still others might get infected by touching contaminated surfaces and/or objects then absentmindedly touching their face without first washing their flu virus laden hands.

If you think you might have flu, see your primary healthcare provider early on. There are antiviral medications that can help and they're most effective if given within the first few days of the illness. If you're at high risk for serious complications of flu, antivirals could still help even if you're further into your illness so see your healthcare provider!



Pregnant Women Need a Flu Shot

Flu vaccine comes in two forms: an injectable form (the flu shot) and a nasal spray. The *nasal spray* (or LAIV) flu vaccine is **not recommended** for pregnant women.

Pregnant women should receive the flu shot. The nasal spray is for use in healthy people 2-49 years of age who are **not** pregnant.

Women who are not pregnant but are breastfeeding may receive the nasal spray flu vaccine.

Influenza (the flu) is a serious illness, especially when you are pregnant.

FACT: The flu can cause serious illness in pregnant women.

Getting the flu can cause serious problems when you are pregnant. Even if you are generally healthy, changes in immune, heart, and lung functions during pregnancy make you more likely to get seriously ill from the flu. Pregnant women who get the flu are at higher risk of hospitalization, and even death, than non-pregnant women. Severe illness in the pregnant mother can also be dangerous to her fetus because it increases the chance for serious problems such as premature labor and delivery.

The flu shot is the best protection for you – and your baby.

FACT: Getting a flu shot is the first and most important step in protecting yourself against the flu.

When you get your flu shot, your body starts to make antibodies that help protect you against the flu. Antibodies can be passed on to your unborn baby, and help protect the baby for up to 6 months after he or she is born. This is important because babies younger than 6 months of age are too young to get a flu vaccine. If you breastfeed your infant, antibodies may also be passed in breast milk.

It takes about two weeks to make antibodies after getting flu vaccine. Talk to your doctor, nurse, or clinic about getting vaccinated as soon as you can.

The flu shot is safe for you and for your unborn child.

FACT: The flu shot is safe for pregnant and breastfeeding women and their infants.

You can receive the flu shot at any time, during any trimester, while you are pregnant. Millions of flu shots have been given to pregnant women over many years. Flu shots have not been shown to cause harm to pregnant women or their infants.

If you have your baby before getting your flu shot, you still need to get vaccinated. The flu is spread from person to person. You, or others who care for your baby, may get the flu, and pass it to the baby. Because babies younger than 6 months are too young to receive the vaccine, it is important that everyone who cares for your baby get a flu vaccine, including other household members, relatives, and babysitters.

FACT: The side effects of the flu vaccine are mild when compared to the disease itself.

After getting your flu shot, you may experience some mild side effects. The most common side effects include soreness, tenderness, redness and/or swelling where the shot was given. Sometimes you might have headache, muscle aches, fever, and nausea or feel tired.



National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases
Office of Director



Even healthy pregnant women can get the flu and have serious complications – know the signs and symptoms of flu.

FACT: If you have symptoms of the flu, call your doctor immediately.

If you have flu-like symptoms—even if you have already had a flu shot—call your doctor, nurse, or clinic right away. Doctors can prescribe medicine to treat the flu and lessen the chance of serious illness. These medicines must be started as soon as possible. If you have any or all of the following symptoms, contact your doctor or nurse immediately:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Headache
- Body aches
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

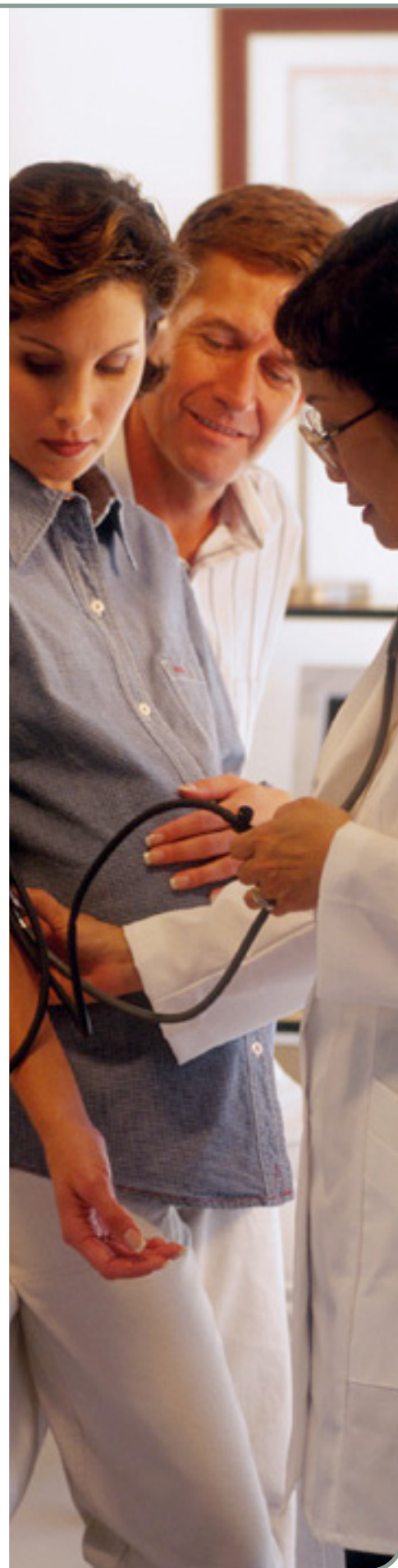


Having a fever from flu, or any other infection early in pregnancy, increases the chance of having a baby with birth defects or other problems. Fever can be brought down with Tylenol® (acetaminophen), but you should still call your doctor or nurse.

If you have any of the following signs, call 911 and seek emergency medical care right away:

- Problems breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness or confusion
- Severe or constant vomiting
- Decreased or no movement of your baby
- High fever that is not responding to Tylenol® or other acetaminophen

Because you are pregnant, you are recommended to get the flu shot to protect yourself and your baby from the flu. Talk to your health care provider about getting a flu shot. For more information about the flu or the vaccine, call 1-800-CDC-INFO or visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>.





Are you at risk for serious complications from flu?

http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm

If you have asthma, diabetes, heart disease, or certain other chronic medical conditions, you're at risk for flu complications that can lead to hospitalization and even death. Vaccination is your best protection against flu.

**Get the facts.
Get vaccinated.**



**U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services**
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention



The Flu:

A Guide For Parents

FLU INFORMATION

What is the flu?

Influenza (the flu) is an infection of the nose, throat, and lungs caused by influenza viruses. There are many different influenza viruses that are constantly changing. They cause illness, hospital stays and deaths in the United States each year.

The flu can be very dangerous for children. Each year about 20,000 children younger than 5 years old are hospitalized from flu complications, like pneumonia.

How serious is the flu?

Flu illness can vary from mild to severe. While the flu can be serious even in people who are otherwise healthy, it can be especially dangerous for young children and children of any age who have certain long term health conditions, including asthma (even mild or controlled), neurological and neurodevelopmental

conditions, chronic lung disease, heart disease, blood disorders, endocrine disorders (such as diabetes), kidney, liver, and metabolic disorders, and weakened immune systems due to disease or medication. Children with these conditions and children who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy can have more severe illness from the flu.

How does the flu spread?

Most experts believe that flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with the flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might get the flu by touching something that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes or nose.

What are the symptoms of the flu?

Symptoms of the flu can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea. Some people with the flu will not have a fever.

How long can a sick person spread the flu to others?

People with the flu may be able to infect others by shedding virus from 1 day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days after. However, children and people with weakened immune systems can shed virus for longer, and might be still contagious past 5 to 7 days of being sick, especially if they still have symptoms.

PROTECT YOUR CHILD

How can I protect my child against the flu?

To protect against the flu, the first and most important thing you can do is to get a flu vaccine for yourself and your child.

- ▶ Vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months and older.
- ▶ It's especially important that young children and children with long term health conditions get vaccinated. (See list of conditions under "How Serious is the Flu?")
- ▶ Caregivers of children with health conditions or of children younger than 6 months old should get vaccinated. (Babies younger than 6 months are too young to be vaccinated themselves.)
- ▶ Another way to protect babies is to vaccinate pregnant women because research shows that this gives some protection to the baby both while the woman is pregnant and for a few months after the baby is born.

A new flu vaccine is made each year to protect against the three flu viruses that research indicates are most likely to cause illness during the next flu season. Flu vaccines are made using strict safety and production measures. Over the years, millions of flu vaccines have been given in the United States with a very good safety record.



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Is there a medicine to treat the flu?

Antiviral drugs can treat flu illness. They can make people feel better and get better sooner and may prevent serious flu complications, like pneumonia, for example, that can lead to hospitalization and even death. These drugs are different from antibiotics, but they also need to be prescribed by a doctor. They work best when started during the first 2 days of illness. It's very important that antiviral drugs be used early to treat the flu in people who are very sick (for example people who are in the hospital) or people who are at greater risk of having serious flu complications. Other people with flu illness may also benefit from taking antiviral drugs. These drugs can be given to children and pregnant women.

What are some of the other ways I can protect my child against the flu?

In addition to getting vaccinated, take – and encourage your child to take – everyday steps that can help prevent the spread of germs.

This includes:

- ▶ Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- ▶ Stay away from people who are sick.
- ▶ Wash hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- ▶ Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- ▶ If someone in the household is sick, try to keep the sick person in a separate room from others in the household, if possible.
- ▶ Keep surfaces like bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, kitchen counters and toys for children clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.
- ▶ Throw tissues and other disposable items used by sick persons in your household in the trash.

These everyday steps are a good way to reduce your chances of getting all sorts of illnesses, but a yearly flu vaccine is always the best way to specifically prevent the flu.



What should I use for hand washing?

Washing hands with soap and water (for as long as it takes to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice) will help protect against many germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

IF YOUR CHILD IS SICK

What can I do if my child gets sick?

Talk to your doctor early if you are worried about your child’s illness.

If your child is 5 years and older and does not have other health problems and gets flu-like symptoms, including a fever and/or cough, consult your doctor as needed and make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks enough fluids.

If your child is younger than 5 years (and especially younger than 2 years) or of any age with a long term health condition (like asthma, a neurological condition, or diabetes, for example) and develops flu-like symptoms, they are at risk for serious complications from the flu. Ask a doctor if your child should be examined.

What if my child seems very sick?

Even children who have always been healthy before or had the flu before can get very sick from the flu.

Call for emergency care or take your child to a doctor right away if your child of any age has any of the warning or emergency signs below:

- ▶ Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- ▶ Bluish or gray skin color
- ▶ Not drinking enough fluids (not going to the bathroom or making as much urine as they normally do)
- ▶ Severe or persistent vomiting
- ▶ Not waking up or not interacting
- ▶ Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- ▶ Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- ▶ Has other conditions (like heart or lung disease, diabetes, or asthma) and develops flu symptoms, including a fever and/or cough.

Can my child go to school, day care or camp if he or she is sick?

No. Your child should stay home to rest and to avoid giving the flu to other children or caregivers.

When can my child go back to school after having the flu?

Keep your child home from school, day care or camp for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone. (Fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) A fever is defined as 100°F (37.8°C) or higher.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/flu or www.flu.gov or call 800-CDC-INFO

MERLIN Registry System*

Year to Date Incidence Comparisons of Selected Diseases for St. Lucie County and Florida

1 Jan 2013– 31 Dec 2013

- Data include confirmed/probable cases in St. Lucie County residents by date reported to the health department, regardless of where infection was acquired
- Counts are accurate at the time of publication but these may change and/or vary from other reports depending on criteria used
- Alterations of case definitions can result in dramatic changes in case counts

	St. Lucie County		State of Florida	
	1Jan-31Dec 2013	1Jan-31Dec 2012	1Jan-31Dec 2013	1Jan-31Dec 2012
Central Nervous System & Invasive Diseases				
ENCEPHALITIS, OTHER (NON- ARBOVIRAL)	1	1	6	12
HAEMOPHILUS INFLUENZAE (INVASIVE DISEASE)	6	7	272	232
MENINGITIS (BACTERIAL, CRYPTOCOCCAL, MYCOTIC)	4	4	156	192
MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE	0	1	63	47
STREP PNEUMONIAE, INVASIVE DISEASE, RESISTANT	12	11	520	458
STREP PNEUMONIAE, INVASIVE DISEASE, SUSCEPT	5	4	584	535
STREPTOCOCCAL DISEASE, INVASIVE GROUP A	6	3	302	249
Hepatitides				
HEPATITIS A	0	4	135	118
HEPATITIS B (+HBsAg IN PREGNANT WOMEN)	13	14	488	413
HEPATITIS B, ACUTE	13	5	376	292
HEPATITIS B, CHRONIC	65	53	4466	4194
HEPATITIS C, ACUTE	8	7	218	168
HEPATITIS C, CHRONIC	362	385	25051	23822
Enteric Diseases				
CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS	19	19	2630	2629
CRYPTOSPORIDIOSIS	7	3	414	471
CYCLOSPORIASIS	0	0	47	25
ESCHERICHIA COLI, SHIGA TOXIN PRODUCING	8	10	545	424
GIARDIASIS	6	18	1133	1099
HEMOLYTIC UREMIC SYNDROME	1	0	14	1
SALMONELLOSIS	79	101	6350	6672
SHIGELLOSIS	3	190	1108	1781
VIBRIO ALGINOLYTICUS	1	1	49	57
VIBRIO CHOLERAEE TYPE O1	0	1	4	7
VIBRIO FLUVIALIS	0	0	14	5
VIBRIO HOLLISAE	0	0	4	1
VIBRIO MIMICUS	0	0	8	4
VIBRIO PARAHAEMOLYTICUS	2	0	55	42
VIBRIO VULNIFICUS	0	2	41	26
Vaccine Preventable Diseases				
INFLUENZA A (NOVEL OR PANDEMIC STRAINS)	0	0	0	0
INFLUENZA A (PEDIATRIC MORTALITY)	0	0	8	4
MEASLES	0	0	7	0
MUMPS	0	1	8	8
PERTUSSIS	10	4	740	575
VARICELLA	25	24	663	816
Vector Borne & Zoonotic Diseases				
ANIMAL BITE (PEP FOR RABIES)	89	85	2743	2373
BRUCELLA	1	1	11	17
DENGUE FEVER *2 imported cases	6*	1	175	125
LYME DISEASE	7	9	195	129
MALARIA	0	0	54	59
RABID ANIMALS	2	0	105	102
ROCKY MOUNTAIN SPOTTED FEVER	0	1	35	31
WEST NILE VIRUS (NEUROINVASIVE)	5	53	5	53
WEST NILE VIRUS (NON- NEUROINVASIVE)	4	21	4	21
Others				
ARSENIC	2	0	14	5
CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING	3	2	179	94
CIGUATERA	1	0	53	30
LEAD POISONING	12	13	761	966
LEGIONELLA	4	3	265	222
LISTERIOSIS	3	0	41	33
MERCURY POISONING	0	0	5	10
PESTICIDE-RELATED ILLNESS/INJURY	9	1	71	71
SAXITOXIN POISONING (PARALYTIC SHELLFISH POISON)	1	0	3	0

*Data in MERLIN reports are provisional,
based on cases entered by county health departments and are
not considered official data